

# U DISTRICT PLANNING BACKGROUND



# Agenda

2

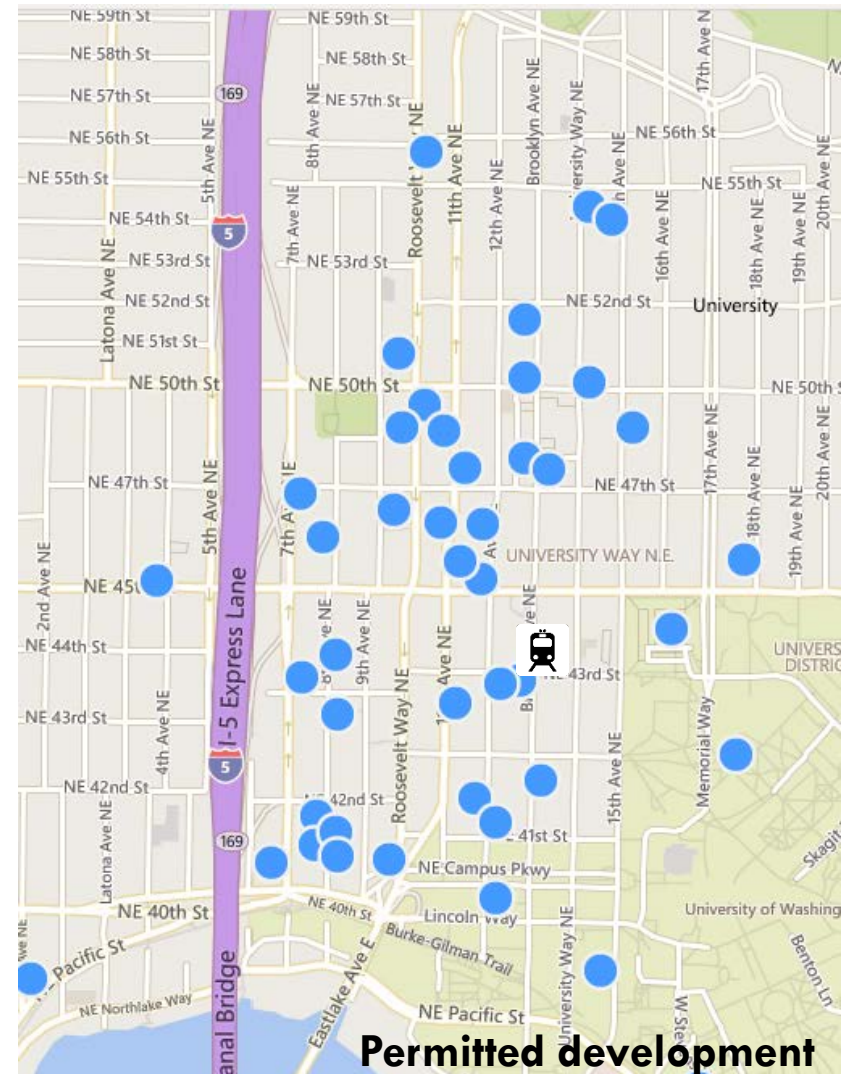
- Planning process, 2011-2016
- Public investments in the U District
- Proposed legislation:
  - ▣ Rezone
  - ▣ Design standards
  - ▣ Affordable housing (HALA)
  - ▣ Open space, historic preservation, social services



# Why plan in the U District?

3

- One of Seattle's 6 urban centers: priority area for growth and investment
- Light rail in 2021
- Significant development underway, more coming
- Active community: strong interest in shaping growth
- HALA – need to incorporate housing affordability



# Community engagement

4

- 90+ public meetings since 2011
- Different approaches: working groups, open houses, coffee chats, social media, public hearings
- Input from residents, business owners, students, developers, homeless youth, businesses, UW, social services, faith community...



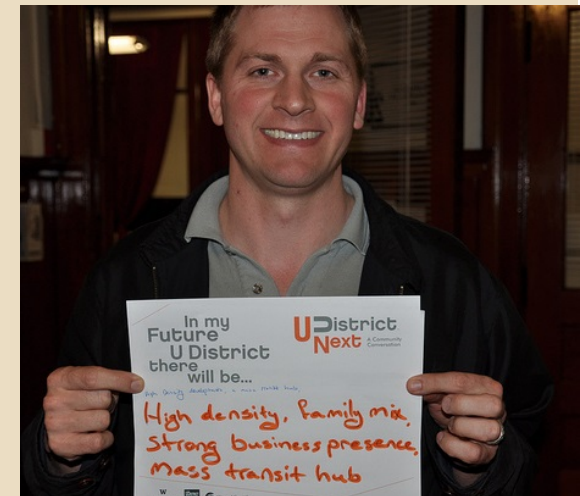
Urban Design Framework open house, 2013.



# What we've heard

5

- Make the most of light rail – density and walkability in the core
- Provide open space to support a denser neighborhood
- Address the loss of affordable housing
- Achieve architectural variety and good design
- Deal with traffic congestion
- Preserve historic buildings
- Include service to support growth
- Protect tree canopy

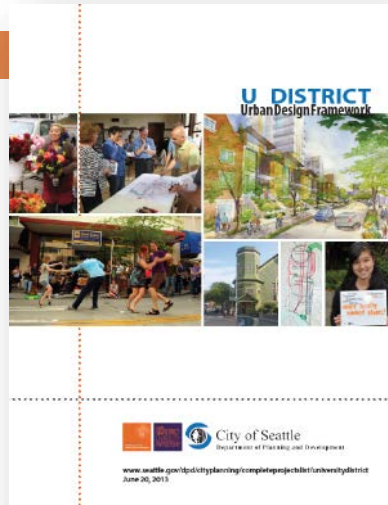


# Results of planning process

6



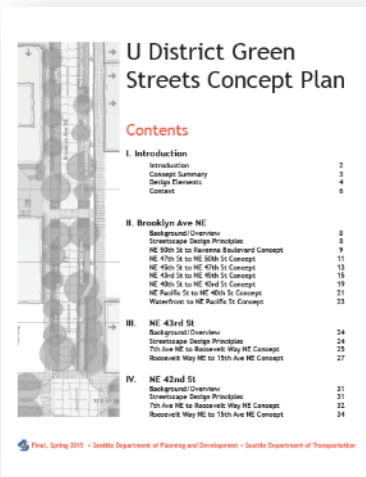
Strategic Plan (2013)



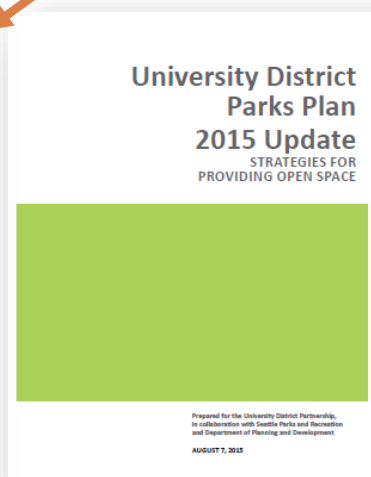
Urban Design Framework (2013)



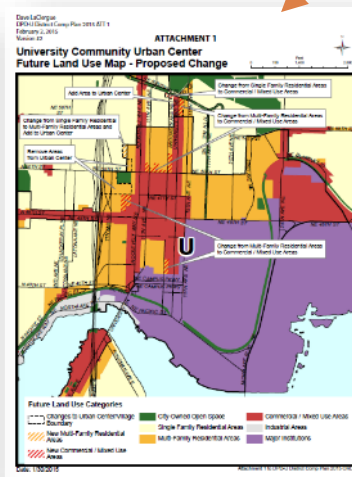
EIS (2013-2015)



Streetscape Plan (2015)



Parks Plan (2015)



Neighborhood Plan amendments (2015)



Zoning recommendations

# Public investments in the U District

7



Bike & ped safety



Light rail



Festival street



Affordable housing



Parks & U Heights Center

# Zoning overview

8

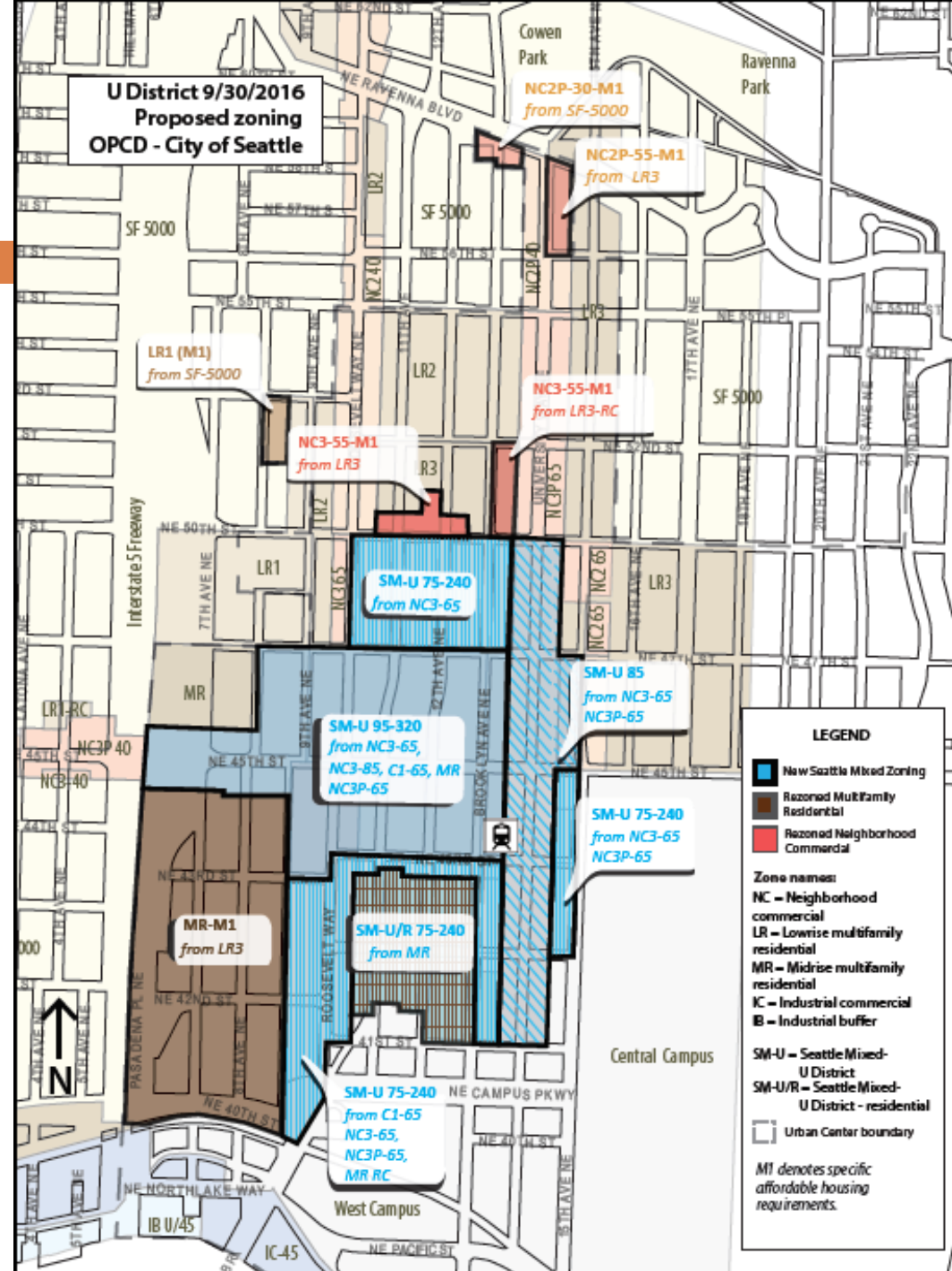
- Increased height and density in the core:
  - ▣ Focus growth near light rail and campus, reduce pressure on surrounding areas
  - ▣ Take advantage of the large redevelopment sites along NE 45<sup>th</sup> St, context of three existing towers
- Design standards: new requirements to better achieve architectural quality and variety, tailored to the U District
- Affordable housing requirements (MHA)
- Requirements and incentives for open space, historic preservation, social services, and other amenities





# Rezone map

- Focus growth south of NE 50<sup>th</sup> St., with residential highrises up to 240' and 320'
- Offices limited to 160' in highrise zones
- Heights stay relatively low on the Ave
- Limited changes north of 50th



# Design standards summary

10

- Maximum width
- Street level uses
- Highrise standards
- Setbacks
- Modulation
- Parking standards
- Floor Area Ratio – limiting the total amount of development
- Landscaping and trees
- Large lot open space requirement
- Residential amenity area



# Maximum width

11

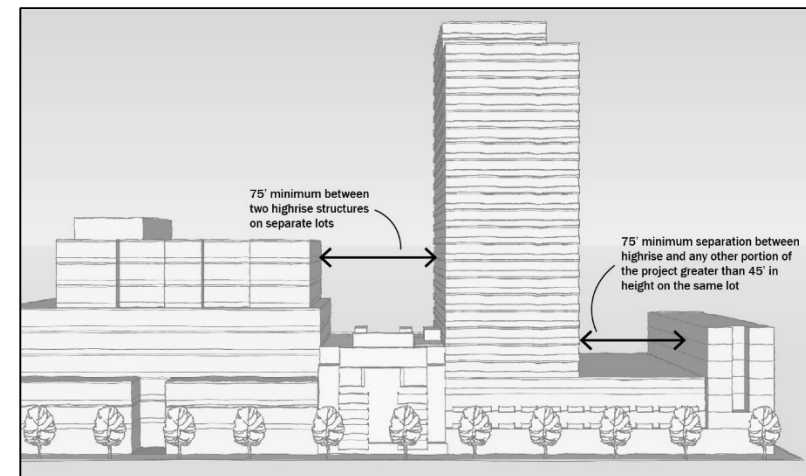
- ❑ Historic buildings in the U District: 50'-200' wide
- ❑ Recent development: 300' to 475' wide – long facades are monotonous, even with good design
- ❑ Recommendations limit any individual building to 250'



# Highrise standards

12

- Sites must be 12,000 sq ft and meet other conditions
- Larger office floor plates limited to 160' height
- Taller towers must have a smaller footprint
- Tower spacing: 75' between structures



# Setbacks

13

- Widen tight pedestrian areas
- Provide plantings along green streets
- Keep a lower street wall on the Ave (setback at 45')
- Ground-level setback for residential



# Landscaping, trees, stormwater

14

- Requirements promote trees, green roofs, rain gardens
- Street trees required
- Canopy in the core projected to grow from less than 5% to greater than 15%.
- Onsite stormwater management required



# Open space requirements

15

- Amenity area required for any residential development
- Large lots must set aside accessible open space
- Mid-block corridors required for certain large sites
- Incentive bonuses for open space



# Seattle's housing reality

2,942 people are living **without shelter** in Seattle.



Over 45,000 Seattle households pay **more than half of their income** on housing.



Average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Seattle **increased 37%** in the last five years.





# HALA in action



**Invest in housing for those most in need**



**Increase overall housing supply, create new affordable housing as we grow**



**Prevent displacement and foster equitable communities**



**Promote efficient and innovative development**

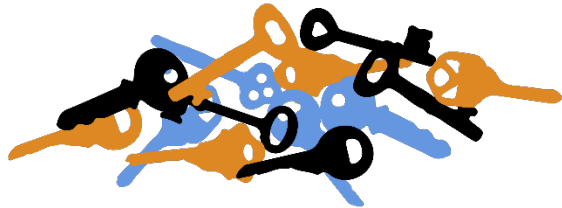
# Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA)


- All new multifamily and commercial development must build affordable housing or pay into a fund.
- Provides additional development capacity to partially offset the cost of these requirements. (Zoning increases)
- Will be applied in neighborhoods throughout Seattle.
- **In the U District, the typical requirement for residential development will be 9% of units set aside, or payment-in-lieu of \$20 per sq. ft.**



# MHA Outcomes in the U District

In the next 20 years,  
**40-275 homes**  
will be demolished,  
**with or without** zoning changes.  
Many of these have low rents.



 1 key = 20 homes

Under **existing** zoning, no more than  
**20 affordable homes**  
would be created through incentives.



\*In addition, 4,000-5,000 market rate units will be created in the U District.



Under the **proposed** zoning,  
**~620-910 affordable homes**  
will be created through  
developer requirements.

# Incentive zoning

20

- In order to go highrise, developments must provide one or more of the following:
  - ▣ public open space
  - ▣ historic preservation
  - ▣ green streets
  - ▣ childcare
  - ▣ space for schools or social services.



# Historic preservation

21

- Transfers of development rights help protect:
  - ▣ Designated landmarks
  - ▣ Vulnerable masonry buildings that go through safety upgrades
- Floor area exemption for keeping historic buildings
- No highrise on the Ave



Frederick Apartments



# Next steps

22

- Public comment
- Continued Council briefings in November and December
- Potential Council amendments
- Council and Mayor approval



Detailed background: [www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/udistrict)



**Seattle**  
Office of Planning &  
Community Development

*S. Bowler*